

HON. MARCY KAPTUR
Â OF OHIO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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Â Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, a little over 3 years have passed since the invasion of Iraq, and it seems that we are no closer to victory than we were the day U.S. troops rolled into Baghdad.

So where are we in Iraq? This is a question many are asking. Just this morning, a suicide bomber attacked police headquarters in Fallujah, killing 15 and wounding 30 others. According to AP reports, 13 of those killed were Iraqi recruits and two were Iraqi police.

In Baghdad over the past 2 days, 34 bodies have been discovered throughout that city. The hands of the men had been bound. All showed signs of torture, and all had been shot in the head.

Another 12 bodies, all Sunni Arabs, were found in the streets over the weekend.

This is appalling news, Mr. Speaker; and, sadly, it is simply a continuation of the sectarian violence sparked by the February bombing of the holy Askariya Mosque in Samara. The elevated violence has claimed hundreds of lives, and many experts and scholars worry if this is deteriorating into a full-out civil war.

We can only hope that will not be the case, Mr. Speaker, but the signs are troubling, and insurgents are targeting Iraqis as well as U.S. troops. Iraqis are attacking other Iraqis, and no one seems to know how to stop the violence.

It is clear that the administration's pre-war intelligence was finagled or flubbed, and war efforts are being bungled. Constant miscalculations and inability to view the situation for what it really is continues to place our troops in harm's way every minute of every day.

Is it any wonder that well-respected military officers out of a sense of patriotic duty feel compelled to speak out against Secretary Rumsfeld and others in this administration, drawing light to the constant bungling?

In March, military General Paul Eaton, retired, said, "Mr. Rumsfeld has put the Pentagon at the mercy of his ego, his cold warrior's view of the world and his unrealistic confidence in technology to replace manpower. As a result, the Army finds itself severely undermanned."

Retired military General Paul Eaton: "Secretary Rumsfeld has shown himself incompetent strategically, operationally and tactically, and is far more than anyone else responsible for what has happened to our important mission in Iraq. Mr. Rumsfeld must step down."

Retired Lieutenant General Greg Newbold: "Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's recent statement that we made the right strategic decisions but made thousands of tactical errors is an outrage," he says. "It reflects an effort to obscure gross errors in strategy by shifting the blame for failure to those who have been resolute in fighting. The truth is our forces are successful in spite of the strategic guidance they receive, not because of it."

Major General John Batiste in April said, "the current administration repeatedly ignored sound military advice and counsel with respect to the war plans. I think the principles of war are fundamental, and we violate those at our own peril."

And Central Command Commander General Anthony Zinni in April said, "I think we are paying the price for lack of credible planning, or the lack of a plan. We are throwing away 10 years of planning, in effect, for underestimating the situation we were going to get into and for not adhering to the advice that was being given to us by others."

Mr. Speaker, all of these are troubling remarks. All of those men speak from personal experience at ground level. Their concerns and protestations were ignored by higher-ups in the Pentagon and in the Oval Office.

The price for speaking the truth in public? Ask General Shinseki. He got fired for daring to speak out on the number of troops that would be needed to maintain the peace once major combat operations were under way.

So, thus far, we have 2,404 U.S. soldiers who have died in Iraq and another 17,762 injured; 27,000 Iraqi civilians have died, and the world does not even know how many there have been injured.

From my own State of Ohio, 107 brave soldiers have died, and 664 have been injured. And the only thing this administration sees fit to do is throw money at the problem and wait for a new President to figure it out sometime after 2008's elections are over.

Our esteemed colleague from the other body, *Joseph Biden*, this week suggested that he agreed with some experts who have proposed decentralizing Iraq, similar to what was done in Bosnia in the mid-1990s. He writes, ``America must get beyond the present false choice between staying the course and bringing the troops home now and choose a third way that would wind down our military presence responsibly while preventing chaos. The idea, as in Bosnia, is to maintain a united Iraq by decentralizing it, giving each ethno-religious group, Kurd, Sunni Arab and Shiite Arab, room to run its own affairs while leaving the central government in charge of common interests."

Mr. Speaker, is it not time to at least consider a new direction to stem the rising violence?